

# ACLU of Wisconsin: Calls on elected officials to denounce rise of racist attacks on Asian-Americans amid COVID-19

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MILWAUKEE — The American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin sent a letter to state and local officials urging public responses to the increasing incidents of harassment, discrimination, and attacks on Asian-Americans in Wisconsin and around the country amid the COVID-19 pandemic. In two weeks alone, there were over [1,100 reports](#) of bias-based attacks on Asians in America.

Along with six other ACLU affiliates across the country, the ACLU of Wisconsin is calling on state and local elected officials to publicly denounce attacks against Asian-American communities, and the scapegoating of Chinese community members in particular, and state that Asians are an integral part of our communities.

The sharp rise in anti-Asian bigotry in the wake of the pandemic has been acutely felt in Wisconsin, where accounts of various forms of harassment have sown widespread fear and uncertainty within the Asian-American community. A Chinese-Japanese restaurant in Milwaukee temporarily [shut down](#) after employees there encountered racist attacks. In Marathon County, home to a large and vibrant Asian-American community, people have faced verbal harassment and intimidation, with reports of individuals even being intentionally coughed on by other residents.

The comments below are from the following:

Chris Ott, executive director of the ACLU of Wisconsin: “The racist vitriol being stoked by President Trump and others who are seeking to falsely blame Asians for COVID-19 must be forcefully disavowed by our public officials. The deliberate scapegoating and hate-mongering we’re seeing right now has no place in our state. Our leaders have a duty to ensure Wisconsinites of all backgrounds — including Asian-American people — feel welcome and protected from hate and discrimination.”

Manar Waheed, senior legislative counsel at the ACLU: “No amount of fear justifies the prejudice, discrimination, and attacks against Asians that we are seeing today. Racist scapegoating has a long and ugly history that has impacted countless communities of color. It is critical that Asian people feel safe, especially in these extraordinary times, so we have to make sure local officials are making clear that any anti-Asian sentiment is un-American.”

The ACLU in its letter is urging local elected officials to release a public statement denouncing the spread of xenophobia and racism against Asian-American community members and the misinformation driving them.

A copy of the letter along with this release can be found here:

<https://www.aclu-wi.org/en/news/aclu-wisconsin-calls-elected-officials-denounce-rise-racist-attacks-asian-americans-amid-covid>